

REMARKS**Summary of the Office Action**

Claims 1, 4-8, 10, and 12-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kishimoto et al. (US 6,396,559) in view of Kume et al. (US 6,115,098).

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 4, and 8, and canceled claims 15-17 without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, and 4-14 are presently pending for consideration.

All Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 4-8, 10, and 12-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kishimoto et al. (US 6,396,559) in view of Kume et al. (US 6,115,098).

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections as being based upon a combination of prior art references that neither teaches nor suggests the novel combination of features recited in independent claims 1, 4, and 8, as amended, and hence dependent claims 2, 5-7, and 9-17.

Independent claims 1, 4, and 8, as amended, all recite a first electrode and a light-shielding layer, wherein “both the first electrode and the light-shielding layer are within a same unit pixel region.” In contrast to Applicants claimed invention, Kishimoto et al. teaches (col. 13, lines 60 and 61) an electrode layer 105 having a plurality of openings (i.e., slits), wherein “a plurality of polymer walls 6 are provided over the transparent electrode 5 so as to surround respective pixels.” Similarly, Applicants respectfully submit that the black matrix 102 is disposed to correspond to the polymer walls 6. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that the polymer walls 6 and the black matrix 102 are individually disposed within vacancies along

boundaries between pixel regions. In other words, although Kishimoto et al. may disclose, with respect to FIGs. 18A and 18B, that the red, green, and blue colored resin layers 3 correspond to one pixel, Kishimoto et al. explicitly teaches forming the polymer walls 6 “to surround respective pixels.” Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that the electrodes 105, the polymer walls 6, and the black matrix 102 disclosed by Kishimoto et al. are not “within a same unit pixel region,” as recited by independent claims 1, 4, and 8, and hence dependent claims 2, 5-7, and 9-14.

In addition, the Office Action alleges that Kishimoto et al. teaches (col. 15, lines 20-23) a “multi-domain.” However, Applicants respectfully submit that Kishimoto et al. teaches a mono-domain region, and is completely silent with respect to multi-domain regions. For example, although Kishimoto et al. explicitly teaches that “[i]mmediately after the voltage application, a plurality of orientation axes are initially formed,” Kishimoto et al. does not disclose that the plurality of orientation axes are maintained, or that the display cell functions to include more than one domain. Specifically, Kishimoto et al. explicitly teaches that “[a]fter a continued voltage application, there will be only one orientation axis in each liquid crystal region 9 which then has only one axially symmetric orientation region (‘mono-domain’).” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that although Kishimoto et al. explicitly teaches that the display cell may initially have multiple orientation axes upon application of a voltage across the display cell, Kishimoto et al. does not, however, teach or suggest a display cell functioning to have more than one domain. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that Kishimoto et al. does not teach or suggest “each region having axially symmetric orientation and having multi-domains,” as alleged by the Office Action.

Furthermore, contrary to the Office Action's allegations, Applicants respectfully assert that Kume et al. fails to teach or suggest a liquid crystal layer having different alignment directions by a plurality of slit patterns. For example, although Kume et al. teaches (col. 10, lines 35-49) different exemplary axially symmetric orientations, Applicants respectfully assert that Kume et al. is completely silent with respect to a liquid crystal layer having different alignment directions by a plurality of slit patterns. Specifically, Kume et al. teaches (col. 10, lines 56-59) that “[i]t is preferable that the number of pixel regions provided for each pixel is as small as possible so that the axially symmetric orientation can be formed stably.” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Kume et al. explicitly teaches use of axially symmetric orientations of liquid crystal molecules, and not multi-domain display cells. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that combining the teachings of Kume et al. with Kishimoto et al. fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness since neither Kume et al. nor Kishimoto et al., whether taken singly or combined, teach or suggest all of the features of independent claims 1, 4, and 8, and hence dependent claims 2, 5-7, and 9-14.

As instructed by MPEP § 2142, “[t]he initial burden is on the examiner to provide some suggestion of the desireability of doing what the inventor has done. ‘To support the conclusion that the claimed invention is directed to obvious subject matter, either the references must expressly or impliedly suggest the claimed invention or the examiner must present a convincing line of reasoning as to why the artisan would have found the claimed invention to have been obvious in light of the teachings of the references.’ *Ex parte Clapp*, 227 USPQ 972, 973 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1985).” Thus, since neither Kume et al. nor Kishimoto et al., whether taken singly or combined, teach or suggest all of the features of independent claims 1, 4, and 8, and

hence dependent claims 2, 5-7, and 9-14, the Office Action's conclusion that it would have been obvious to "adapt the definition of axial symmetry as taught by Kume to the axially symmetric nature of the molecules as taught by Kishimoto to widen the viewing" is completely unsupported by the teaches of Kume et al. and/or Kishimoto et al.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 2, and 4-14 are neither taught nor suggested by any of the applied prior art references, whether taken alone or in combination. Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 should be withdrawn because the above-discussed novel combinations of features are neither taught nor suggested by any of the applies references, whether taken alone or in combination.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited. Should there remain any questions or comments regarding this response or the application in general, the Examiner is urged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under

37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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